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Promoting inclusive education in private schools: LGBTQIA+ educators' role

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

This study defined the strategies and challenges of the instructors in the integration of artificial intelligence tools in teaching from the School of Arts, Sciences, and Education and School of Engineering, Architecture, and Information Technology of the Divine Word College of Laoag. Using a phenomenological research design, specifically descriptive phenomenology, the study provides an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of the ten instructors of the Divine Word College of Laoag focusing on their strategies employed and challenges encountered. Data were gathered through online interview questionnaires via Google forms, analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes. It was found to have significant challenges which include overreliance to artificial intelligence, lack of professional training in the use of artificial intelligence, and even the cost and access of artificial intelligence. In response, instructors employed strategies in the form of motivations and adjustments such as enhancing in class learning, improve teaching experiences, and even enhancing student participation and personalized learning. The study gives emphasis the need to have professional development on the use of artificial intelligence tools in integrating them in the teaching-learning process, a need to ensure data protection in collecting information from the students, and ensuring to have an equitable and inclusive access to artificial intelligence tools that are cost efficient.

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Introduction

Inclusive education has been one of the major steps in education to promote and achieve equal access to quality education and safe learning environment for learners. In traditional conceptions, inclusive education focused largely on students with disabilities. However, (Florian, 2019) explained that modern frameworks have expanded to include other marginalized identities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) individuals. This implies that inclusive education should not just anchor its pedagogy on differently able learners but to all learners there is in the classroom.

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Recent studies suggests that discrimination among LGBTQIA+ youth are still rampant up to this day. According to (GLSEN, 2022), over 82% of gay people, as a general term for LGBTQIA+ members, are being verbally harassed in school. Moreover, Tang & Poudel (2018) and Reyes et al. (2019) found that bullying among LGBTQIA+ community members still exists in schools. This means that acceptance in the society for gay people is still a challenge in the Philippines.

The same way, LGBTQIA+ educators also faces identical experiences. Gray & Harris (2022) found that they often experience professional isolation, microaggressions, and are frequently compelled to conceal their identities to avoid discrimination or dismissal. Despite growing legal protections in some countries, LGBTQIA+ educators in many regions, especially in conservative societies like the Philippines, continue to navigate hostile environments that restrict their agency and visibility in schools (Tang & Poudel, 2018).

Consequently, this jeopardizes the potential of LGBTQIA+ educators to serve as advocates and role models for inclusivity. Ferfolja et al. (2020) states that their lived experiences often cultivate empathy, cultural sensitivity, and a commitment to social justice. These traits are essential elements to inclusive pedagogy.

Hence, this research sought to explore teachers' perspectives on the role of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education. By centering teachers' voices, this study aimed to identify the ways LGBTQIA+ educators contribute to fostering inclusive education in schools. Additionally, it aimed to address the need for culturally contextualized insights, particularly within regions where LGBTQIA+ issues remain under-discussed in academic and professional circles like in Ilocos Norte.

Review of related literature

This section presents existing studies and theories related to the topic to provide background and support the purpose of the research. It helps identify knowledge gaps, avoid duplication, and guide the study's direction. It also strengthens the credibility of the research and supports the development of its findings.

Status of inclusive education in the Philippines

Inclusive education in the Philippines is anchored in legal and policy frameworks, including the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities (Republic Act No. 7277), and the Department of Education's (DepEd) policy frameworks such as DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009. These mandates collectively aim to ensure equitable access to quality education for all learners, irrespective of their diverse physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other unique conditions (Department of Education, 2009). Despite this strong legal foundation, the practical implementation of inclusive education faces considerable challenges. These include limitations in teacher training, inadequate infrastructure, and a scarcity of essential support services (UNESCO, 2020). While progress is evident in specific areas, systemic and cultural barriers persist, particularly affecting learners from marginalized sectors. This highlights a critical gap between policy aspiration and effective practice within the Philippine educational landscape (Tuazon, 2022).

Teachers' perspectives towards inclusive education

Educators are central to the successful implementation of inclusive education. Their perceptions, attitudes, and levels of preparedness profoundly influence its efficacy in classrooms. Globally, teachers often report feeling inadequately equipped to address the diverse needs inherent in inclusive settings (Al-Hroub & Abas, 2020). Within the Philippine context, while teachers generally affirm their support for inclusive principles, they frequently acknowledge a lack of specialized training and sufficient resources to effectively cater to varied learner requirements (Tuazon, 2022). Furthermore, studies consistently indicate a demand among educators for more professional development and clearer pedagogical guidelines tailored for inclusive environments (Dizon, 2021). The challenge of managing large class sizes while simultaneously providing individualized instruction remains a significant and recurring concern for many Philippine teachers. Consequently, despite favorable attitudes, the limited capacity-building initiatives and insufficient institutional support often impede the effective delivery of genuinely inclusive education across many Philippine schools.

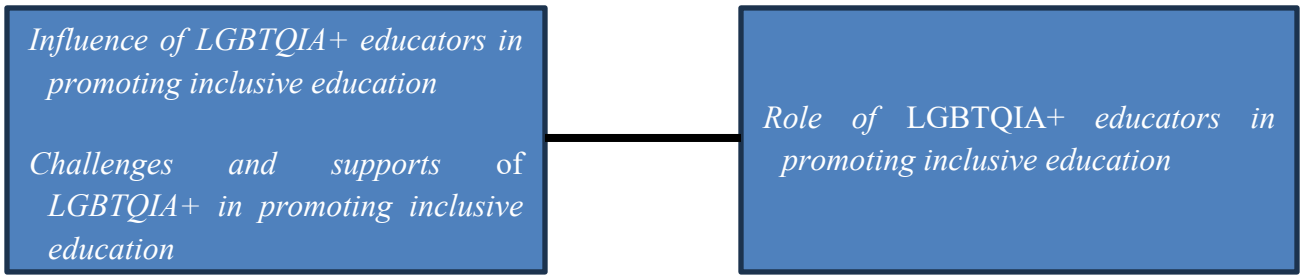
Discrimination among marginalized learners

Even with the existing policy frameworks promoting equity, marginalized learners, encompassing ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, those from low-income families, and LGBTQIA+ youth, continue to encounter discrimination and exclusion within educational settings (GLSEN, 2022). Research consistently reveals that LGBTQIA+ learners, in particular, face challenges such as bullying, stereotyping, and a lack of visibility within curricula and school facilities (Tang & Poudel, 2018; UNESCO, 2021). The absence of gender-neutral restrooms and inclusive learning materials further contributes to their sense of alienation, negatively impacting their academic outcomes and overall psychological well-being. This ongoing reality underscores the persistent influence of cultural conservatism and systemic inequities that hinder the full embrace of diversity within the Philippine education system.

The role of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education

LGBTQIA+ educators function as both symbols and active facilitators of inclusion within schools. Their visible presence and authenticity challenge heteronormative norms and significantly contribute to fostering a more accepting school climate. Additionally, Smith & Johnson (2023) affirmed that these educators frequently provide informal emotional support to students navigating identity issues and discrimination, acting as vital confidantes and mentors. However, many LGBTQIA+ teachers themselves experience marginalization and may feel compelled to conceal their identities to mitigate professional risks (Gray & Harris, 2022). Nevertheless, they consistently advance inclusive values through initiatives like gender-sensitivity training and advocacy for curriculum reform. Thus, with adequate systemic support, LGBTQIA+ educators possess considerable potential to become powerful agents of inclusive education, effectively modeling authenticity and cultivating respect for diversity among both students and fellow teachers.

Conceptual framework


Influence of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education
Challenges and supports of LGBTQIA+ in promoting inclusive education
Role of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education

Statement of the problem

Generally, this study aimed to determine teachers' perceptions regarding the role of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. *How do teachers assess the influence of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education?*

2. *What challenges and supports affect the role of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education?*

Research methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, data sources, study location, population and sampling method, data collection tool, data analysis procedure, and ethical considerations.

Research design

This study employed a phenomenological research design to explore teachers' experiences and perspectives on the role of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education, specifically within the context of a private school. Through administering open-ended questionnaire, and focusing on the subjective realities of educators, this study seeks to uncover how teachers experience and interpret the contributions, challenges, and advocacy efforts of LGBTQIA+ educators in fostering diversity and inclusion in the school.

Locale of the study

The study was conducted at Batac Junior College, Inc., a private educational institution located at Batac City, Ilocos Norte. Batac Junior College, is known for its commitment to holistic education and its efforts to promote values of respect for diversity among learners. This is heavily reflected in its objectives as a long-standing private school. It serves both junior and senior high school students from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, making it an ideal setting to explore how inclusive education is being shaped in private institutions.

Population

The population of this study consisted of twelve (12) teachers currently employed at Batac Junior College, Inc., across junior and senior high school levels. These educators were selected due to their direct experiences with the school's teaching community, including their interactions with LGBTQIA+ colleagues and their involvement in implementing inclusive teaching strategies.

Using purposive sampling, participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) they have had professional experience with LGBTQIA+ educators; (2) they are currently active in classroom teaching; and (3) they are willing to participate in a study on gender inclusivity. This strategy will ensure an in-depth exploration of real-life experiences of teachers with their LGBTQIA+ co-teachers on how they contribute to the achievement of inclusive education in the school.

Data gathering instruments

The primary data collection tool for this study was an open-ended questionnaire consisting of six (6) qualitative questions aligned with the two main research questions: (1) How do teachers perceive the influence of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education? and (2) What challenges and supports affect the role of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education? These questions were designed to elicit detailed narratives and reflections from the respondents, enabling the collection of insights into both the perceived impact and the contextual barriers and enablers faced by LGBTQIA+ teachers.

Data gathering procedure

Firstly, the researcher secured approval from the school administration and obtain ethical clearance. Secondly, the researcher distributed the open-ended questionnaires to the selected participants. The process began with an orientation in a face-to-face manner, explaining the study's objectives, procedures, and ethical considerations. Participants were given informed consent forms, which they signed before receiving the questionnaires. The questionnaires was administered through the use of Google Forms for the convenience of the participants.

Teachers were be given one week to complete the questionnaire, with follow-ups for reminders to ensure participation. Using this self-administered questionnaire ensured an in-depth reflection of the respondents, which allowed them to provide thoughtful and honest responses.

Data analysis tool

The responses collected from the open-ended questionnaires will be analyzed using thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a widely used method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. In using this tool, first, there is a need to familiarize the data through repeated reading. After which, initial codes were generated. It was followed by looking and listing for themes. These themes were then reviewed. Once evaluated, the themes were defined and categorized, in preparation for the production of the final report. This method is chosen for its flexibility and suitability for examining participants' perspectives in an in-depth manner.

Ethical consideration

This study adhered strictly to ethical guidelines as outlined in the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Before data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent were secured in writing, and participants were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point without consequences.

For anonymity and confidentiality, assigning pseudonyms to participants instead of using names was done. The researcher ensured that no sensitive personal information was disclosed, and all findings were reported objectively. Ethical clearance from the school was also be secured prior to implementation.

Data presentation and analysis

This section presents the analyzed data gathered from 12 private school teachers concerning their perspectives on the role of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusive education. Six major themes were developed based on the recurring patterns in participants' responses. Below is a summary of the themes and their corresponding categories, the frequency of responses associated with each category, and the interpretation of the data gathered.

Theme	**Category**	**Frequency**
Theme 1: LGBTQIA+ educators as agents for safe and inclusive learning environments	Fostering respect, safety, and acceptance	9
	Celebrating diversity through representation	7
	Promoting kindness and positive culture	4
Theme 2: LGBTQIA+ educators as authentic beings and advocates for inclusivity	Modeling authenticity and positive identity	10
	Promoting safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces	9
	Advocating for diversity, equity, and change	7
Theme 3: LGBTQIA+ educators as active advocates of diversity	Promoting awareness and respect for diversity	10
	Challenging bias and stereotypes	7
	Enriching curriculum with diverse perspectives	6
Theme 4: Challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ educators in school	Discrimination and lack of respect	9
	Cultural or religious resistance	4
	Lack of representation and leadership support	3
Theme 5: Support Systems of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusivity	Anti-discrimination policies	8
	Peer supports	5
Theme 6: Ways to improve the support system for LGBTQIA+ educators	Strengthening and enforcing inclusive policies	8
	Providing training and awareness programs	7
	Enhancing leadership and curriculum support	5

Source: Researcher's analysis on the field data gathered from the questionnaires distributed via google form to 12 participating private school teachers.

Theme 1: LGBTQIA+ educators as agents for safe and inclusive learning environments

This theme emphasizes the important role of LGBTQIA+ educators in the promotion of Inclusive Education in the school. The most frequently mentioned contribution of LGBTQIA+ educators was their ability to foster respect, safety, and acceptance within schools with nine (9) participants noting. On the other hand, seven (7) participants emphasized the importance of visibility and representation, aligning with the idea that diversity should be celebrated in educational settings. Moreover, there were four (4) who mentioned that LGBTQIA+ educators exude with kindness and positivity. These data strongly indicate that these educators are instrumental in creating a learning environment that is heavily characterized with safety, respect, and acceptance. These are manifested in the following statements from the participants.

Beyond simply representing diverse identities, LGBTQIA+ educators in our school are instrumental in shaping a school culture rooted in equity, mutual respect, and inclusion. The educators help create learning environments where every student feels seen, heard, and valued, regardless of their background, identity, or experiences. (T10)

They help create a space where everyone feels accepted and respected. By simply being themselves, they show students that it's okay to be different and that kindness and respect are for everyone. (T2)

LGBTQIA+ educators create a safe and inclusive space by simply being themselves. When students see a teacher who is open, kind, and respectful to everyone, it encourages them to do the same. For example, a teacher who shares their story or supports a student going through a tough time shows that it's okay to be different—and that school is a place where everyone belongs. (T9)

These foundational impacts suggest that the very presence and demeanor of LGBTQIA+ educators actively shape a more welcoming atmosphere for all students. Aside from respect, there is an assurance for learners that they it is okay to be different. This finding aligns with UNESCO (2018), which emphasizes that inclusive education requires creating environments where diversity is respected and everyone feels a sense of belonging. Furthermore, it coincides with the Department of Education's Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017) that highlights the need to respect diverse sexual orientations and gender identities in classrooms. In addition, a study by Glick and Fisher (2023), which explored student perceptions of inclusive teachers, found that students consistently reported feeling safer and more academically engaged in classrooms led by teachers perceived as overtly supportive of LGBTQ+ identities. This means that the visible affirmation, empathy, and positive demeanor of these educators significantly contribute to a more inclusive school climate, fostering a sense of belonging among all students regardless of what or who they are. This directly aligns with the participants' emphasis on "respect, safety, and acceptance," "visibility and representation," and "kindness and positivity" as core contributions of LGBTQIA+ educators. These findings prove that LGBTQIA+

educators help in cultivating school environments where all students can feel secure, valued, and encouraged to be their authentic selves.

Theme 2: LGBTQIA+ educators as authentic beings and advocates for inclusivity

This theme reveals the influence of LGBTQIA+ educators as role models who actively champion authenticity and advocate for an inclusive school environment. Ten (10) participants highlighted how LGBTQIA+ educators provide inspiration by demonstrating authenticity. Their ability to model living openly was seen as a catalyst for encouraging students and other teachers to practice acceptance and understanding. Moreover, nine (9) participants acknowledged their role in fostering safe and supportive environments, while seven (7) recognized their advocacy for equity. These are supported through the following statements of the participants.

They inspire others by living authentically and standing up for fairness. Their courage and openness encourage students to embrace who they are and to support one another. (T2)

One way is they serve simply as representations themselves of diversity and inclusivity. (T11)

LGBTQIA+ educators serve as role models by showing courage in being true to themselves, which inspires students to do the same. They listen without judgment, speak up against unfair treatment, and make sure every student feels seen and included. Just by being present and supportive, they show that kindness, respect, and acceptance matter every day in school. (T9)

LGBTQIA+ educators at our school show students how to be themselves and be proud. They lead by example, openly sharing who they are and showing that LGBTQIA+ people belong. They also make sure school lessons teach about all kinds of people, helping everyone feel seen and respected. (T8)

These responses consistently highlight how transformative these educators' genuine presence are. Similarly, Patterson and Walls (2022), found that the experiences of LGBTQ+ educators serve as crucial role models who positively impact the well-being and academic engagement of LGBTQ+ students, and foster greater empathy among non-LGBTQ+ students. This provides empirical weight to the idea that LGBTQ+ educators are vital social-emotional assets within schools, whose presence cultivates a more compassionate, understanding, and academically conducive environment for all students. Additionally, GLSEN (2021) affirmed a strong correlation of schools with openly LGBTQIA+ educators and highly inclusive school climates, supported by fewer instances of homophobic remarks and greater student-reported feelings of safety and belonging. Consequently, these findings imply that the visibility and advocacy of these educators contribute to a broader culture of acceptance that benefits the entire school community, validating the observations from T2, T9, and T8.

Theme 3: LGBTQIA+ educators as active advocates of diversity

Emphasizing diversity, this theme elucidates how LGBTQIA+ educators normalize individual differences and help both students and fellow teachers to become more accepting about it. Based on the responses, ten (10) participants highlight that LGBTQIA+ educators primarily help promote awareness and respect for diversity. This signifies their vital role in spreading appropriate information about

diversity among learners and people as a whole. Furthermore, seven (7) mentioned that they also challenge bias and stereotypes within the classroom, eradicating nuances and notions that are outdated and unfounded. Moreover, six (6) stated the ability of the LGBTQIA+ teachers in enriching the the learning experience by including diverse perspectives. These manifestations are observable from the following statements of the participants.

LGBTQIA+ educators promote awareness and acceptance by modeling inclusion, challenging bias, and fostering respect for all forms of diversity. (T3)

LGBTQIA+ educators influence awareness and acceptance by modeling inclusive behavior, sharing diverse perspectives, and fostering open, respectful dialogue. They help learners and teachers understand and appreciate differences, promoting empathy and a culture of belonging for all learners. (T4)

LGBTQIA+ educators help students and teachers understand and accept everyone's differences. By being open about who they are, they show that all kinds of people belong. They also teach about different life experiences in lessons and stand up against unfairness, which helps everyone in the school learn to be more respectful and open-minded. (T8)

These findings firmly establish LGBTQIA+ teachers as critical individuals in integrating diversity into teaching and school culture. They help shape how diversity is understood, discussed, and celebrated within school settings. This coincides with the study of Russell and Russell (2023), which found that educators who openly identify as LGBTQ+ are often at the forefront of implementing culturally responsive pedagogies that explicitly incorporate diverse perspectives and challenge hegemonic narratives. This suggests that such educators are positioned to facilitate discussions about identity, privilege, and social justice, which directly correlates with the participants' emphasis on promoting awareness and challenging bias. Additionally, (Ness & Hughes, 2022) underscores that teachers who embody diverse identities are more likely to create curriculum and classroom environments that authentically reflect the complexities of the world. The consistency of these findings solidifies the argument that LGBTQIA+ educators are effective drivers of diversity and inclusivity within educational institutions.

Theme 4: Challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ educators in school

This theme critically examines the various barriers and difficulties encountered by LGBTQIA+ educators within the school environment, despite their significant contributions to fostering inclusivity. The participants' responses clearly indicate that these educators often operate in contexts that are not consistently supportive, highlighting a disparity between their positive impact and their lived experiences.

According to the participants' responses, a majority of nine (9) affirmed that these teachers experience discrimination and disrespect. Other challenges include cultural and religious beliefs and practices with four (4) mentions and lack of leadership representation and support with three (3) mentions. These are embedded in the following responses of the participants.

In our school, one of the key challenges that LGBTQIA+ educators face is discrimination. Discrimination can lead LGBTQIA+ educators to feel marginalized or unappreciated, which can negatively impact their sense of security, professional fulfillment, and their capacity to fully engage and thrive in the classroom. (T10)

[They face] lack of respect and discrimination. (T12)

LGBTQIA+ educators may face discrimination, lack of representation, limited support from leadership, and cultural or religious resistance from the community, which can affect their sense of safety and belonging. (T3)

These responses not only identify the challenges but also unpacks their far-reaching consequences, including feelings of marginalization, reduced professional fulfillment, and ultimately, a diminished capacity to perform their roles. Furthermore, they suggest that broader societal or community attitudes, often rooted in traditional interpretations, can translate into an unsupportive environment for the teachers. This implies a clash between progressive inclusive values of today and entrenched traditional norms from already-established cultures and religions.

These findings are consistent with existing literature. Meyer and Keenan (2018) emphasized that without robust institutional support, inclusive educators are highly susceptible to burnout or may resort to self-censorship, thereby undermining their potential impact. This aligns with T10's concern about diminished "capacity to fully engage and thrive." Moreover, UNESCO (2021) has consistently warned that the vision of inclusive education cannot be fully realized unless both educators and learners feel genuinely protected and valued. Their call for "whole-school" approaches to address systemic prejudice directly resonates with the challenges identified here, particularly the need for leadership support and tackling cultural resistance.

Additionally, according to Mayo and Blackburn (2023) who explored the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers in various educational, found that despite policy advancements, LGBTQ+ educators continue to navigate environments marked by subtle and overt forms of discrimination, often stemming from community prejudices and insufficient institutional backing. This indicates that perceived lack of administrative support and the burden of constantly justifying their identities significantly contribute to stress and professional dissatisfaction. This mirrors the study's findings regarding discrimination, cultural resistance, and the specific concern about "limited support from leadership" (T3), underscoring that these challenges are not isolated incidents but rather persistent systemic issues across diverse educational settings. Therefore, these findings do not only confirm the existence of significant barriers for LGBTQIA+ educators but also highlights the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to transition into a more supportive and equitable school environments for all teachers, regardless of their gender identities and orientation.

Theme 5: Support systems of LGBTQIA+ educators in promoting inclusivity

This theme explores the existing mechanisms that support LGBTQIA+ educators in both expressing their identities and promoting inclusive education. While the previous theme highlighted significant challenges, this section identifies the counterbalancing elements of support present within the school environment. Based on the data, eight (8) participants mentioned existing anti-discrimination policies and five (5) participants observed support from fellow teachers as the main supporting forces for LGBTQIA+ teachers. These are reflected in the statements of the participants below.

Encourage LGBT+ teachers to make a network or support group where they can talk about LGBT issues and use this to show that LGBT+ voices matter. (T7)

There are policies against discrimination, supportive school leaders, and trusted peers who stand with them. (T2)

In the Philippines, LGBTQIA+ educators are supported by national anti-bullying laws that protect against discrimination. Our school leaders also try to follow these rules. Additionally, teachers often support each other to create a more welcoming environment. (T8)

These imply that support originates from both national legal frameworks and local school leadership's attempts to adhere to these guidelines. The existence of such policies is a foundational step towards creating a protected environment for the teachers. Moreover, the findings demonstrate an awareness among participants of the value of collective peer support and the potential for these networks to amplify LGBTQIA+ voices within the school, thereby allowing them to fulfill their roles as active agents of inclusive education. This combination of formal and informal support is essential for nurturing an environment where LGBTQIA+ educators can feel secured and empowered.

However, a critical tension emerges when comparing these findings with Theme 4. While formal policies and support systems are identified, the overwhelming evidence from Theme 4 reveals that discrimination and disrespect persist despite their presence. This discrepancy raises a crucial question regarding the effectiveness and implementation of these policies. Therefore, the mere existence of anti-discrimination policies does not automatically translate into a fully inclusive and safe environment if their enforcement is weak. This gap suggests that while the intention for support is present, there may be challenges in consistently translating policy into practice.

Such findings align with the study of Koschoreck and Capper (2022), which revealed that while many schools have adopted anti-discrimination policies, their efficacy is often undermined by a lack of consistent implementation, insufficient training for staff, and lingering biases among some faculty and community members. Their research points to a disconnect between policy existence and lived experience, where policies serve as an important baseline but require active, ongoing effort and accountability to truly mitigate discrimination. In the same case, the GLSEN (2021) National School Climate Survey noted that despite having found of the positive impact of inclusive policies, many

LGBTQ+ educators still report experiences of harassment and discrimination. With these, there is a strong demand for better practical policy application that goes beyond just policy adoption.

Theme 6: Ways to improve the support system for LGBTQIA+ educators

Revealed in this theme is a call for deeper institutional changes such as concrete policies, teacher training, and representation in decision-making bodies. There's a desire to shift from isolated initiatives to systemic transformation. Most participants (8 participants) stated that LGBTQIA+ teachers will be better supported when there is a strongly enforced inclusive policies for them. Furthermore, seven (7) mentioned of providing more training and awareness programs, and there are also five (5) suggesting for an enhanced leadership and curriculum support from the school. These are shown in the following statements.

Schools should strengthen policies and training and promote their full inclusion in leadership and curriculum. (T1)

The school can improve support by strengthening inclusive policies, providing regular LGBTQIA+ sensitivity training, creating safe spaces, and ensuring visible leadership support for diversity initiatives. (T3)

The school can further improve support for LGBTQIA+ educators by implementing mandatory inclusivity training for all staff and embedding LGBTQIA+ perspectives into the curriculum. Additionally, creating safe spaces for dialogue, increasing representation in leadership roles, and establishing clear reporting mechanisms for discrimination would strengthen a culture of equity and respect. (T6)

These statements collectively point that policy strengthening must be intrinsically partnered with practical integration into core school functions, including leadership roles and curriculum development. In relation, these signify a recognition that effective inclusivity requires ongoing education for all staff, not merely a one-time seminar. Moreover, they address the need for leadership to actively champion LGBTQIA+ inclusion and ensure that curriculum content is reflective of diverse identities. While Theme 4 identified a "lack of leadership representation and support" as a challenge, this recommendation offers a clear solution, which is a proactive leadership that not only supports policies but also drives their integration into educational practices. This includes increasing visible LGBTQIA+ representation in leadership roles (as suggested by T6) to provide powerful role models and ensure that LGBTQIA+ perspectives are authentically considered in decision-making and curriculum design.

These call for a systemic change is strongly echoed in UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (2021) which emphasizes that teacher training on gender and inclusivity must be embedded in all levels of the education system, rather than being treated as isolated, or superficial add-ons. This directly aligns with the participants' desire for comprehensive, mandatory training and the integration of LGBTQIA+ perspectives into the curriculum. Moreover, the Department of Education's (DepEd) ongoing program to enhance the implementation of Gender-Responsive Education through continuous monitoring,

integration into teacher training programs, and investment in diverse school leadership further validates these findings.

In relation, a study by Perez and Santiago (2024), which examined the institutionalization of LGBTQ+ inclusive practices in K-12 schools, found that the most effective and sustainable changes occurred in schools where there was a triangulation of strong, visible administrative commitment, comprehensive and ongoing professional development for all staff, and the active integration of LGBTQ+ themes into the curriculum and school culture. Their research indicates that isolated efforts are insufficient. Authentic institutionalization requires a unified approach where policies are consistently enforced, educators are continuously trained, and leadership actively embodies inclusive values.

Conclusion

This part summarizes and presents the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study.

The general conclusion of the study

The exploration of LGBTQIA+ educators' roles in promoting inclusive education reveals their indispensable contribution in shaping equitable, safe, and diverse school environments. LGBTQIA+ educators serve not only as role models but also as catalysts for cultivating a school culture grounded in acceptance, authenticity, and respect for diversity.

The participants' responses consistently highlighted that LGBTQIA+ educators foster safety, visibility, and kindness at Batac Junior College, Inc. They model authenticity and advocate for equity, thereby inspiring both students and peers to embrace inclusion. Their presence supports culturally responsive pedagogy and expands students' understanding of identity, privilege, and belonging. These findings underscore the significance of LGBTQIA+ educators as active agents of diversity.

However, despite their impactful contributions, LGBTQIA+ educators still encounter considerable barriers, including discrimination, cultural resistance, and limited leadership support. These challenges expose a persistent disconnect between inclusive policy frameworks and their practical application within school settings. While anti-discrimination policies and peer support exist, their effectiveness is often undermined by inadequate enforcement, lack of training, and systemic biases.

These results emphasize the urgent need for institutional commitment to enforce inclusive policies, offer sustained professional development, and increase LGBTQIA+ representation in leadership. Schools must transition from isolated efforts to comprehensive strategies that embed inclusivity into the curriculum, policies, and school culture.

Overall, LGBTQIA+ educators are not only participants in the education system but vital architects of inclusive learning. Their identities, voices, and leadership must be celebrated, supported, and institutionalized to build school communities where all learners are able to realize their dreams without restrictions and fears of judgement.

Results and discussion

The findings of this study highlight the important role of LGBTQIA+ educators in fostering inclusive education within private school settings. Based on the responses of twelve teachers, six themes emerged. The first three themes emphasized the positive influence of LGBTQIA+ teachers in building safe and inclusive learning environments, modeling authenticity, and promoting awareness and respect for diversity. These findings imply that LGBTQIA+ educators serve as key figures in normalizing discussions about diversity in the classroom, encouraging students to embrace differences and practice respect.

Teachers reported that when LGBTQIA+ educators live authentically, they become role models not only for LGBTQIA+ students but for all learners, showing how acceptance and self-confidence can flourish in a supportive environment. This affirms the Social Learning Theory, where students adopt positive behaviors through observation of respected adults in the school setting. The participants' views also echo Queer Theory, as they indicate how the presence of LGBTQIA+ educators challenges traditional, heteronormative norms still common in many schools.

However, the study also revealed significant challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ teachers, such as discrimination, cultural or religious resistance, and a lack of representation or administrative support. These obstacles reflect that while the school community values inclusivity in principle, implementation remains inconsistent. Teachers observed that even when LGBTQIA+ educators strive to promote equality, external pressures and biases limit their full participation and confidence at work.

Support systems such as anti-discrimination policies and peer support were cited as helpful, but often not enough. Teachers recommended stronger, clearer policies and more active leadership involvement to ensure LGBTQIA+ educators feel safe, protected, and appreciated. This implies that administrators play a critical role in bridging policy and practice—by providing staff training and establishing professional development programs that promote inclusive teaching methods and respectful communication.

In light of these results, progressive and inclusive schooling aligns well with the principles of Progressivism in education, where learners' diverse backgrounds and identities are acknowledged in the classroom. When LGBTQIA+ educators are empowered, the entire learning environment shifts toward a more student-centered, equitable approach.

These findings ultimately suggest that for inclusive education to be truly realized, LGBTQIA+ educators must be supported not only by policies but by school culture itself. Open communication between staff and management, continuous training, and representation in leadership can help sustain a culture where all educators are valued.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that LGBTQIA+ educators play an integral role in promoting inclusive education, particularly by fostering safe, respectful, and diverse learning environments. Teachers perceive these educators as authentic individuals who model acceptance, advocate for equity, and challenge discriminatory norms in schools. Their presence not only enhances students' understanding and acceptance of diversity but also exemplifies how inclusion can be practiced within everyday classroom interactions.

However, the findings also revealed that LGBTQIA+ educators continue to face challenges, including discrimination, lack of representation in leadership, and cultural or religious resistance. While some support systems such as anti-discrimination policies and peer support are present, they are often insufficient or inconsistently implemented. As such, stronger and more explicit institutional support is essential to ensure that LGBTQIA+ educators can fully exercise their role in advancing inclusive education.

Overall, the study emphasizes the need for schools to create environments where all educators—including those from the LGBTQIA+ community—feel safe, empowered, and valued. By reinforcing inclusive policies, providing continuous professional development, and fostering open communication, school leaders can cultivate a culture of acceptance and respect. Doing so not only benefits LGBTQIA+ teachers but enriches the entire learning community, contributing to a more equitable and progressive education system.

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